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COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME AND COORDINATION
Resumed thirty-seventh session
13-17 October 1997
Agenda item 3

DRAFT REPORT

Rapporteur: Mrs. Sharon BRENNEN-HAYLOCK (Bahamas)

Addendum

PROGRAMME QUESTIONS: PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1998-1999 (item 2 (a))

Section 27C. Office of Human Resources Management

1. At its 30th meeting, on 13 October 1997, the Committee considered section 27C, Office of Human Resources Management, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999.

Discussion

2. Several delegations expressed support for and reaffirmed the importance of the activities of the section. Some questioned whether the proposal in paragraph 27C.57 to abolish one P-4 post and one General Service (Other level) post in the Examinations and Tests Section would not adversely affect the objectives of the United Nations, as reflected in the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001[1] and reaffirmed in General Assembly resolution 51/226 of 3 April 1997, that the conduct of examinations for entry into the system be held with maximum efficiency and the need to make significant progress in geographical and gender representation in the Secretariat. Several delegations called upon the Secretariat to provide assurances that the reform measures and the abolition of posts would not impede the improvement of equitable geographical distribution and gender balance in the Secretariat through the National Competitive Examination Programme. Some delegations requested the Secretary-General to refrain from reducing the proportion of entry-level posts

at the P-1 to P-3 level for budgetary purposes, in accordance with resolution 51/226.

3. In connection with training, several delegations recalled General Assembly resolution 50/11 of 2 November 1995 on multilingualism, in which the General Assembly stressed the need to ensure adequate human and financial resources for maintaining the teaching, at all levels, of the official and working languages of the Secretariat. One delegation queried the criteria for utilizing outside sources for training programmes. Another delegation recalled that one of the objectives of the subprogramme was to design and conduct training programmes to develop and maintain staff capacities and skills. That delegation reiterated that effective management of United Nations responsibilities required substantial provisions for training and questioned whether the level of resources proposed was not too low for an organization as large and with such a diversity of responsibilities as the United Nations.

4. One delegation questioned the implication of administering tests at Headquarters for an estimated 3,500 candidates annually, referred to in paragraph 27C.56, 3 (e) (iv). It was indicated that such tests were conducted by the United Nations not only for its own recruitment activities but also in support of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Population Fund.

5. Several delegations requested further explanation regarding the delegation of authority to departmental/office executive offices and divisions of administration at offices away from Headquarters.

Conclusions and recommendations

6. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly the approval of the programme narrative of section 27C, Office of Human Resources Management, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 contained in document A/52/6/Rev.1.

7. The Committee took note of the assurances given by the Secretariat that the National Competitive Examination Programme would, despite the proposed abolition of posts in the Examination and Tests Section, be fully implemented during the biennium 1998-1999.

8. Any measure of delegation of authority in human resources management activities from the Office of Human Resources Management to other units must be preceded by the introduction of an adequate system of accountability and responsibility.

Notes

[1] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 6 and corrigendum (A/51/6/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Corr.1).